



**October 27, 2008**

### **Senate panel moves campaign finance reform measure**

Legislation designed to bring further openness and accountability to the electoral process was recently approved by the Senate Campaign and Election Oversight Committee.

Senate Bill 1299 would require the secretary of state to post any filed campaign finance complaint, response, follow-up, answer and/or rebuttal regarding the complaint on his or her official Web site. The measure would strike language in the current campaign finance law requiring the secretary of state to mail a notice of action every 60 days to the complainant and the alleged violator after the complaint is made formal.

The bill would also require the secretary of state to post to his or her Web site whether or not there may be reason to believe that a violation has occurred no later than 60 business days upon receipt of a rebuttal statement.

If the secretary of state is unable to correct or prevent further violation through these methods after 30 business days, the secretary must then refer the matter to the attorney general and the appropriate county prosecuting attorney for the enforcement of any criminal penalty, or to commence a hearing for enforcement of any civil violation.

If it is determined a violation of has occurred, the secretary of state would issue an order requiring the violator to pay a civil fine equal to triple the amount of the improper contribution or expenditure plus a maximum \$1,000 fee for each violation.

### **Senate passes housing inspection and adult foster care licensure measures**

Legislation to streamline local housing inspections and exclude some private residences in limited situations from adult foster care licensure was unanimously approved by the Senate.

Senate Bill 635 will allow local governments to accept inspections by federal Housing and Urban Development officials or the Michigan State Housing Development Authority and will extend the interval between inspections from three years to six years.

Senate Bill 1163 will exclude from licensure very limited situations in which one adult receiving foster care services through Medicaid is being cared for in a private residence. The bill provides a safeguard by requiring that these residences provide room and board services only to one person, and not to any other individuals in the home.

SBs 635 and 1163 have been sent to the Michigan House for further consideration.

### **Measure to update road fund distribution introduced**

Legislation designed to make the allocation of Michigan Transportation Fund dollars more equitable was recently introduced in the state Senate.

Senate Bill 1506 would change the Michigan Department of Transportation's road fund distribution from being based on total mileage to "annual vehicle miles traveled" as determined by the Federal Highway Administration.

Despite having the largest road system in Michigan after the state trunk line system, with 1,100 more miles than either Wayne or Macomb counties, Oakland County ranks 71st out of the state's 83 counties in road funding.

According to a report from the Citizens Research Council of Michigan, under the current distribution system Oakland County receives \$89.99 per person compared to Keweenaw County's \$569.91 per person. As a result, a lightly traveled rural two-lane road in the Upper Peninsula is treated equal to a heavily used multiple-lane road in Royal Oak.

The same report noted that "allocation percentages are more a remnant of the characteristics of Michigan's highway system of nearly 60 years ago."

According to the study, if MDOT's distribution formula was based on annual vehicle miles traveled instead of actual miles of road, Oakland County would see a 26.7 percent increase in transportation funding, or an additional \$17.9 million.

SB 1506 was referred to the Senate Transportation Committee for further consideration.

### **Senate bill allowing public hospitals to borrow funds signed**

Legislation allowing public hospitals to borrow through the Michigan State Hospital Finance Authority was recently signed in law.

Senate Bill 1304, now Public Act 294 of 2008, enables public hospitals to use the Healthcare Equipment Loan Program (HELP). Previously, only non-public hospitals are eligible to borrow funds through the finance authority and HELP. Public hospitals only have the option of higher-interest financing.

According to the Michigan Health & Hospital Association, the proposal is expected to benefit 15 hospitals across the state. Both the Michigan State Hospital Finance Authority and the HELP program offer low cost capital financing to non-profit health care organizations.

### **Contact information**

*Thank you for your interest in our current state issues. If you would like to receive future legislative updates via e-mail, or have any questions or concerns, please contact my office at [sen22@senate.michigan.gov](mailto:sen22@senate.michigan.gov).*

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